

# MY ISLANDS

Mary Williaghorn Frear

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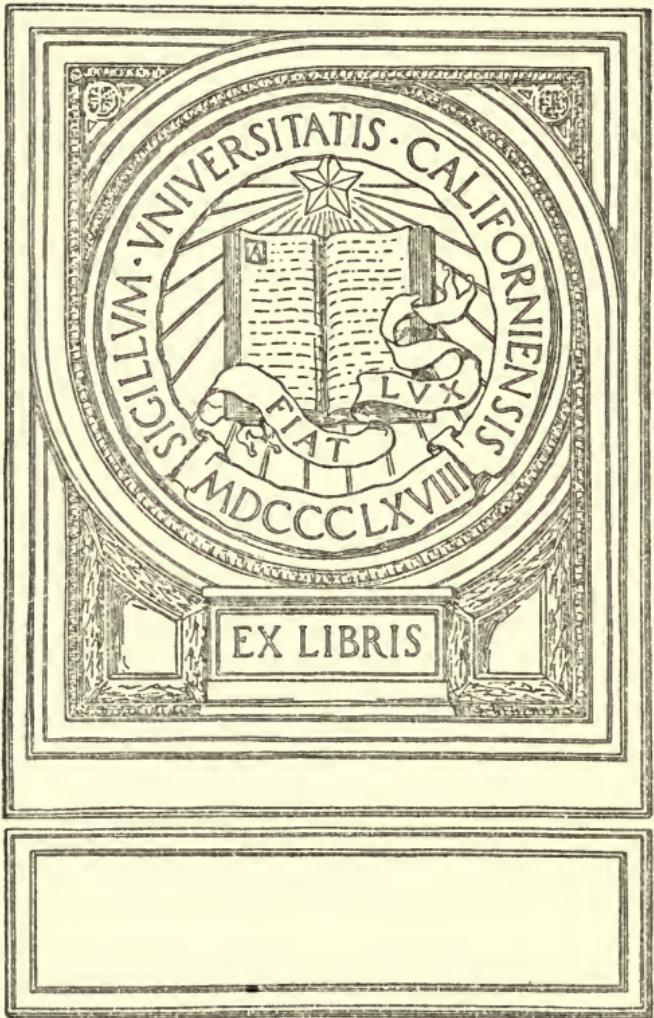
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# MY ISLANDS

## CONCERNING THE READER

ONLY verse have I to offer.  
Will he buy,  
As gentle reader, or as scoffer  
Pass me by  
In the crowd? What can I proffer?  
Who am I?

Only a friend of birds and flowers,  
Butterflies,  
Rainbows, shadows, moonbeams, showers.  
Does he prize  
Gleams and glooms of summer hours?  
These he buys?

Just to show my wares a pleasure!  
If a thought  
Should escape with lilted measure  
That he bought,  
He may use it at his leisure,  
Though unsought.

# MY ISLANDS

## Verses

BY

MARY (DILLINGHAM) FREAR

AUTHOR OF THE COCOA PALM AND OTHER  
SONGS FOR CHILDREN

“We know the merry world is round,  
And we may sail forevermore.”

*Tennyson.*



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TO  
YOU, MY SPIRIT-KIN

with a special  
aloha - for our  
old Wellesley memory  
from  
Mary Dillingham  
Acadia  
February the eighth  
Nineeteen seventeen.

M191934



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## MY ISLANDS

ON the edge of the world my islands lie,  
Under the sun-steeped sky,  
And their waving palms  
Are bounteous alms  
To the soul-spent passer-by.

On the edge of the world my islands dream,  
Under the tender gleam  
Of moon and star  
That beckon far  
From worlds that only seem.

On the edge of the world my islands sleep  
In a slumber soft and deep.  
What should they know  
Of a world of woe  
And myriad men that weep?

On the edge of the world my islands wake,  
And their languid sleep forsake.  
They long to live,  
Their all to give,  
And the work of the world partake.

On the edge of the world, dear islands, stay,  
Far from the clamorous day.  
Content with calm,  
Hold peace and balm,  
Be Isles of the Blest for aye!

## LELE-ANAE

O MAIDEN waterfall that dar'st to leap  
From out thy virgin fastness on the height,  
To join thy mother in the valley deep,  
Thou ne'er shalt reach her ; for thy lover, Wind,  
An unseen Cupid, thou his Psyche fair,  
Waits not to ask thee if it be thy mind,  
But, swift-embracing, seizes thee in flight  
And makes thee one with the enfolding air.

## THE TRADE WIND

RUSTLE, red leaves on the mango tree;  
The world is glad and my heart is gay;  
The trade winds, faithful, strong and free,  
Rustle red leaves on the mango tree,  
Toy with the waves of the laughing sea,  
And lift the hair of the child at play.  
Rustle, red leaves on the mango tree!  
The world is glad and my heart is gay.

## THE SOUTH WIND

THE wind is in the south to-day!  
Ah, me! Ah, me!  
I'm wishing me a league away!  
The wind is in the south to-day  
And mournfully doth sing his lay  
The sea! The sea!  
The wind is in the south to-day!  
Ah, me! Ah, me!

## DIAMOND HEAD

LEAHI, wondrous Wreath of Fire!

Leahi, hoary name!

'Twas lisped by grandsire's grandsire's sire

Before his tribe was tame,

Yet none to him gave legend dire

Of ashes or of flame.

Long centuries have dawned and passed,

All silent of the life

That in a moment's fitful blast

Thy being rent in strife;

Yet in thy stones the tale was cast

When Hell took thee to wife.

Leahi, is thy passion dead?

Ah, no, Protectress thou:

A later lover thy proud head

With fire hath crowned. Thy vow—

The seas to fill with molten lead

Ere him thou'l disavow!

## IN HAWAII

FIND here the balm of beauty,  
And the cool caress of wind  
    That knows no snows,  
    Nor boist'rous blows,  
But whispers soft and kind.

Find here the palm of poetry,  
Find here the land of song;  
    Pluck thee a flower  
    For royal dower,  
And to thyself belong.

Find here the calm of search-end;  
The lotus eat; forget  
    The world-old sorrows,  
    The blind to-morrows,  
The hurry, care, and fret.

Beneath the palm of poetry,  
In the balm of beauty's spell,  
    Through the calm and peace  
    Of woe's surcease,  
Thy psalm of life shall swell.

## NIGHT-BLOOMING CEREUS

THE night is fair,—too fair for us to stay  
Close-curtained from the soft and radiant light.  
We wander forth to breathe the sweet sea-breeze,  
Where on the road the shadows of the palms  
Make soundless music as we slowly pass,  
By gentle swaying.

Look you, what is this?  
Is this a banquet for the gods outspread  
Upon this gray and lichen-covered wall?  
The knotted, creeping cactus lies loose-flung  
Upon the lava-stones. Upon it stand  
A thousand glistening goblets, flared at brim,  
Uplifted to the moon. The cups of white  
Are set on scaly necks of grayish green;  
And trembling in their lustrous, lip-curved bowls  
Is scented gold? nay;—amber wine? nay, nay,  
'Tis rather moonlight trapped, or odor visible.

Ah, goblets rare, I know that when the light  
Shall come at morn, ye shall be overturned,  
And drained of all the glory of to-night.

## KAMAO

OH let the skylark thrill the list'ning plain,  
The nightingale romantic woo the rose,  
The wilding thrush from me my heart has ta'en,  
And he my rapture knows!

The joy of living! I could voice it never;  
His utterance—melodious, gushing, clear,  
Free and ecstatic,—I could list forever.  
It is my heart I hear!

## TO HALEMANU

“HOME of the Birds!” how sheltered thou  
Dost nestle ’mid the enfolding hills;  
Beyond the strife of human wills,  
Unknowing souls that cringe and bow.

Yonder, the awesome cliffs among,  
Wheels the Koae, the tropic-bird;  
Leaps the lithe goat; afar are heard  
Wild echoes through the canyon flung.

Deep in the forest sings the stream;  
The thrush calls wooingly his love;  
Winds slumber; the calm sky above  
Completes the circle of a dream.

Ah, Halemanu, wood-nest rare!  
Our fledgling thoughts wing back to thee;  
For, high above the restless sea,  
The birds of peace are brooding there.

## OUR ISLAND EASTER

How can I know that spring is come  
When all the year is green,  
When bursting bud and tender leaf  
In every month are seen?

Nor ever icy, muffling hands  
Upon the brook are laid,  
That daily sings as sing the birds  
Within the woodsy glade?

It is not measured of the eye;  
It is unheard of ear.  
The surging sap the heart perceives  
And knows that spring is here.

The new leaves come, the old leaves fall,  
Nor naked stands the bough,  
As growth, indeed, the soul acquires,  
Only the soul knows how.

Arise, O Lord of life, in me!  
Unseen, build me anew;  
Let strength to strength, and grace to grace,  
Prove resurrection true!

## IN THE TANTALUS FOREST

THOU hast risen, Eucalyptus,  
From a dank and mouldy soil;  
Thou hast struggled for the sunlight,  
Thou hast towered by lusty toil;  
But no contact with thy fellows  
Could thy heart of hearts despoil.

O thou stately Eucalyptus,  
How I love thine odorous balm!  
Thou dost heal me, mind and body,  
As thou sing'st thy leafy psalm.

At thy foot, among lush grasses  
And the spreading fans of palm,  
I am lying, blest and blessing,  
In a spirit-lifting calm.

## BEYOND THE HARBOR GATE (DIAMOND HEAD)

BEYOND the harbor gate there lies  
A sheeted figure gravely gray,  
Or softly splendid 'neath the play  
Of shifting light from tropic skies.  
An effigy in stone, with face  
Toward morning's promise still upraised,  
Its taskless hands in folded grace  
Are careless now, or blamed or praised.  
Such lines of peace by time are wrought.  
Away with wearying, worrying thought!

## IN MEMORY OF OPUKAHAIA<sup>1</sup>

FOUR score

Of changeful years have passed, and more,  
Since he did for his people help implore,  
Raining his tears beside fair Learning's door.  
Mahalo,<sup>2</sup> Opukahaia!

Oh, brave

His soul, that to its longing strictly clave,  
His people by an unknown God to save!  
A tribute bring to his forgotten grave.  
Mahalo, Opukahaia!

<sup>1</sup> Opukahaia = Obadiah.

<sup>2</sup> Mahalo = an expression of reverence and gratitude.

## HAWAII'S GREETING TO YALE

OVER the vast of ocean's trackless blue,  
Beneath the steep Sierras' lofty pines,  
Across the desert drear, and lonely mines,  
The sea of salt, the prairies,—'tis thy due,—  
A message comes from loyal sons of Yale  
In far Hawaii, "Hail, O Mother, hail!"

Well nigh a century has circled quite,  
Since at thy door wailed Opukahaia's<sup>1</sup> plea,<sup>2</sup>  
That thou shouldst send with him, across the sea,  
First carriers of the Gospel's seeds of light.  
Now, thanks to thee, good Mother Yale,  
Hawaii sends her greeting, "Hail, all hail!"

Fair soil for eastern planting was that land;  
Thy sowing has produced a nation's food.  
Across the decades of increasing good  
Thanks for thy first outreaching, loving hand;  
Hear, "Hail, all hail!"  
Hawaii sends "Aloha" back to Yale.

<sup>1</sup> Opukahaia = Obadiah.

<sup>2</sup> A Hawaiian lad who had shipped on a whaler to New England was found weeping on the steps of Yale College. Briefly, as a result of this youth's plea, two young Yale graduates went as first missionaries to the Hawaiian (then called Sandwich) Islands in 1820.

## ON THE TRAIL

Oh, ride with me breast-high amid the jasmine,  
And touch the cool, green leaves and scent the  
bloom,

Inhaling breaths that lift us, high and holy,  
Into a life where peace and joy find room!

Ah, let us linger there until the cadence  
Of day the distant city glorifies:  
Then, turning, watch from night's pale, silver  
dawning  
O'er yon blue mountain-top, the moon arise!

Dear, what if thy life-sun has sunk before thee?  
Will not a moonrise break thy spirit's gloom?  
Come, ride with me, breast-high amid the  
jasmine,  
And touch the healing leaves and scent the  
bloom.

Over the vast of ocean's trackless blue,  
Beneath the steep Sierras' lofty pines,  
Across the desert drear, and lonely mines,  
The sea of salt, the prairies,—ah, 'tis due,—  
A message comes from loyal sons of Yale  
In far Hawaii, "Hail, O Mother, hail!"

## ON THE SHORE

A LITTLE empty cradle  
Is lying on the shore.  
I've seen many pretty cradles,  
Never one so sweet before.  
But this rose-lined, sea-shell cradle  
Lies empty on the shore.

The tide brings bits of seaweed,  
Other toys, a score of things ;  
The waves are rocking, rocking,  
The ocean-mother sings ;  
But the empty sea-shell cradle,  
In vain, in vain it swings !

## TO A HEDGE OF NIGHT-BLOOMING CEREUS

LIKE myriad moons found sleeping  
On a river's tranquil breast;  
Like a flock of snowy pigeons  
At even sunk to rest;

Like the ivory gold-filled caskets  
Of a Persian miser's hoard;  
Like the goblets Hebe carries  
At Olympian banquet board;

Like giant pearls resplendent,  
In a golden fretwork placed,  
Fit for a bride's adorning,  
On rich embroideries traced;

Peaceful as lotus lilies  
On a sacred pool of glass;  
Pure as the clouds of summer,  
Across the blue that pass;

Deep as the heart's own secrets;  
Still as a soul in prayer;  
Stifling with passionate fragrance  
Filling the ambient air;

Blest as the saints in glory,  
Radiant, crowned, and free;  
Ah, thus, Night's Queen of Flowers,  
Flood visions bright of thee!

## ALOHA

NEEDS must there be in every tongue,  
Or roughly spoke, or sweetly sung,  
A word of common greeting  
That beareth oft repeating.

Bon dia, sayonara, or farewell,—  
Spoke lightly, deeply, who can tell?  
Adieu, good-bye, auf wiedersehn,—  
The words are memory's refrain.

Aloha, dearest of them all,—  
What pictures doth it not recall?  
What tender tones in telling!  
What sentiments upwelling!

Aloha,—'tis a loving-cup;  
With what thou wilt, thou fill'st it up.  
A common dole to many lips,  
Or chalice rare; one drinks or sips,  
With love athirst or sated,  
Sometimes with breath abated.

Thou send'st me thine aloha, friend;—  
From heart-deceptions, heaven forfend!

## A FAREWELL

FAREWELL to purpling vale and cloud-kissed peak,  
To shore of pearl engirt by opal sea,  
To rainbows that reward the souls who seek !

O tropic isles,  
Ye are God's smiles !

I thank him on devoutest knee,  
He bids ye of his joy and love to tell.

Farewell !

But list, the isles reply, though voiceless they,  
O stranger, with the vision in thine eyes,  
Thy spirit shall abide with us for aye.

Here Beauty reigns serene,  
And he who crowns her queen,  
Her lover, lives in paradise,  
Or near or far, in palace or in cell.

Farewell !

To say farewell is not to grieve nor sigh  
That yesterday cannot to-morrow be.  
To say farewell, to bid a long good-bye,  
It is to breathe a prayer  
Upon the enfolding air  
For blessing in entirety ;  
That each in God's own good may ever dwell.  
Farewell !

## EASTER MORNING

AH, thou silver trumpet, Calla,  
Breathe again that silent note!  
Round my senses, as a fragrance,  
Let thy soundless music float.  
Love, pure, deathless, all-triumphant,  
Singeth from thy golden throat.

## MEASURING-CUPS

GOD poureth truth and sunlight  
As a flood of golden wine;  
To each his measure, so hold up  
Yours, little neighbor Buttercup,  
And I will hold up mine.

## THE RACE

A SUNBEAM and a shower ran a race  
Once on a day.  
One chased the other o'er a little face,  
Whose, I'll not say.  
A rainbow glistened on the eyes downcast,  
A smile flashed out ; sunbeam had won at last,  
And April changed to May !

## WHILES

I LISTEN in vain for a voice most sweet  
And a laugh with a merry ring:  
There's never a glimmer of bare, white feet,  
And the grass grows under the swing.

The star-bestrewn hills were so bright with dew!  
They are brown. Under brooding wing  
Wee birdlings were nestled. They grew and flew;  
Ah, the grass grows under the swing!

O stars, illumine my tear-dimmed eyes!  
Teach me, O birds, to sing!  
Help me, O hills, to be heavenly-wise,  
For the grass grows under the swing!

## ALWAYS

WHAT matter to-night if winds are chill,  
What matter to-night if rains are drear ?  
My loving mother holds me still,  
Enfolded in her arms so dear.

What matter to-night if skies are fair ?  
My mother lies upon her bier ;  
If balm infuses all the air ?  
Only her lifeless clay is here.

Nay, winds are chill or winds are warm,  
But the mother-spirit, pure and bright,  
The mother-soul keeps all from harm,  
Enfolds me this and every night.

## THE COMING STORM

THERE is storm in the air ; from the south is  
the word,

And the message portends that the deep deeps are  
stirred.

The mountain is hiding its head in a mist,  
As a nun all modestly wrapped in her veil,  
Or a bride at the altar, shy, tremulous, pale,  
A tremulous bride, too shy to be kissed.

There is hush in the air, like the hush after death ;  
Nay, rather the fate-freighted, birth-bringing  
breath,

In-drawn in agony, out-breathed in power,—  
All existence explained by the worth of this hour.  
A hush, then a sound o'er the deep-swelling main,  
Full-gushing, large-dropping, as tears relax pain,  
And the storm is upon us. Ah, Heaven-sent rain !

## HEARTSEASE

DIDST ever think whence came the pansy, mild  
And tender flower, our heartsease sweetly named?  
Bearing almost the likeness of a child,  
Fair-featured, softly curved, and with its eye  
Now sunward raised in glee, or now, for rest,  
In slumber closed, upon the old Earth's breast?

'Twas long ago,—yes, æons far away  
In time. The Earth was then accounted gray.  
The frosts of centuries had seamed her face,  
And ages piled the snows of mountain-birth  
Upon her bosom. But no stormy seas  
Nor burning suns, nor stony grasp of ice  
Had changed the loving heart of Mother Earth.

Each op'ning spring saw clustering round her  
knees  
New beauties in the vernal forest deep.  
And, 'mong the sportive creatures of the wood,  
Men's children gamboled free and blithe and gay;  
And when was closed for them life's little day,  
They nestled in her bosom, lulled to sleep.

The ages passed of peaceful springs and snows,  
And ages came, by sin and sorrow cursed.  
The limpid lakes no longer showed to heaven  
The image undefiled, that God had given,  
When man stooped down to slake in them his  
thirst.

For blurred and broken was the image now.  
And Earth, recoiling from a blow, in wrath  
Inflicted on his fellow by a man,  
Had found a stain of blood across her brow.

Forgetful of her tender, clinging vines,  
Nor minding forest giants, once her pride,  
She felt alone the breath of scorching plains  
That seared the saplings thrusting through  
the sod ;  
She felt alone the thorns that pierced her side.

The Earth lay prostrate in her agony.  
“O God,” she cried, “behold, I writhe in pain ;  
An evil demon hath destroyed my peace ;  
The garden is a wilderness become.  
Behold, O God, behold the bloody stain !  
Hast thou no token of forgiving love ?”

As silently as Night gives birth to Morn,  
So God from heaven let fall a pitying tear.  
It cooled the Earth’s wild, fever-throbbing pulse ;  
It mingled with the purple blot of sin ;  
And in that very hour was heartsease born.

## THE LITTLE BROWN ROCKER

THREE score years and ten have vanished  
Since our mother's mother, rocking,  
Nursed her tend'rest hopes, while rocking  
In the low brown rocking-chair.

Childhood memories come knocking,  
Pictures sweet and true unlocking,  
Of our mother, also rocking,  
Singing, rocking, singing there.

Over leagues of restless ocean,  
Leagues of years, this heirloom, rocking,  
Holds the past and present, rocking  
Memories and dreams most fair.

May the dreams be never mocking,  
Dreams of little children, flocking  
To the future mother rocking  
In the dear old rocking-chair.

## SPRING

HEART of mine, plough up my brain,  
Sow it with pure desire.  
Pray Heaven's blessing, as sun and rain,  
To bring fair buds from the mire,  
Clustering blossoms of sympathy,  
That courage and hope suspire.

## MOUNT SHASTA

O HIGH-BROWED Shasta, neighbor to the sky,  
In majesty alone above the hills,  
What has thy kind to do with petty ills?  
Repose and calm upon thy summits lie.  
Thy noble front doth life and fate defy.  
Cloud-wreathed and yet austere in dignity,  
Hast thou no lines of sweet benignity,  
For human crowds that hurry on to die?  
Beholding thee, who thinks of fires long dead,  
Where now thine ice-born rivers flow away?  
Who dreams of passion centuries ago  
And throbbing heart beneath thy hoary head?  
Unmindful of the summer's fiercest ray,  
Upon thy barren bosom sleeps the snow.

## QUESTIONS

WHAT can the joy of speech reveal  
    To lips that ne'er were dumb?  
What vigor mean, unto an arm  
    By weakness never numb?  
How can the peace of shore be felt,  
    Unbruised by wave or tide?  
How can the depths of life be known,  
    Unless that one has died?

## PSYCHE

LITTLE she recks of the triple brute,  
Cerberus though he be.  
Wonder-lit eyes by their soul-speech mute  
Utter the mystery  
Temptingly sweet in the lid-shut prize.  
Fearless of gruesome things,  
Treads she unscathèd where phantoms rise,  
Glad in her god-given wings.  
What though the casket so rich and rare  
Hold but the sleep of death?  
What though no kindly, celestial air  
Succor her parting breath?  
Thrilled by the power of love, shall she  
Waken to immortality.

## THE SLEEPING CHRIST-CHILD

THE Christ-Child sleeps upon his mother's knee,  
His garments loose, his head in soft repose  
Upon his chubby arm. Across his robe  
A budding thorn-weed lies, but touches not  
His flesh. Within his hand an op'ning rose  
Of silken petals tenderly is clasped.  
His baby feet are dimpled, bare and white;  
Ah, must it be, that they at last shall tread  
The weary, blood-tracked steeps of Calvary?  
About his golden hair a halo rests,  
Prophetic of an endless reign of light.  
His lips are trembling almost into smiles,  
But not the sort we see in baby dreams.  
The joy of Him is one for smiles too deep.  
The dusky lashes curtain close the eyes  
Ere long to gaze in pain too great for tears.

Sweet Infant, sleep! Upon Thy mother's knee  
Relax the form that soon shall know no rest.  
The roses clasp, for when Thine hands are grown  
The thorns will pierce them, as they take the  
crown

Humanity will offer unto Thee.  
Sweet Infant, sleep, the while a universe  
With bated breath awaits Thy waking power.  
Sleep on, till God Himself shall waken Thee.

## TO A SKYLARK

THOU, lark, hast found a pathway new,  
By angels never trod,  
    And fearless, high  
    Doth scale the sky  
And sing thy song to God.

Thou art an earth-born chorister,  
Yet dost to heaven belong.  
    Dare I to sing?  
    Dare I to bring  
To God my gift of song?

## SONG-POOLS

KNOWETH the lark where the song-pools lie,  
Stoopeth and drinketh his fill.  
Afterward poureth from vaulted sky  
Melody, rapture-athrill.  
Where lie the pools of his ecstasy?  
Nest-nigh, crest-high on the hill!

## REST IN EGYPT

In the lone Egyptian desert  
Paused the infant Christ in flight.  
And the questions of the ages  
    Found their answer in the light  
Shining round Him:—light that banished  
    Gloom of Egypt, paled the stars,  
Yea, dimmed e'en the lurid glory  
    Of the war-encrimsoned Mars.

There was peace on earth most precious  
    While, against the Sphinx's breast,  
Adamant, the weary mother  
    And the Christ-Child lay at rest.  
Grew that heart of stone no warmer,  
    Shed that fixed eye no tear,  
At the tender human touching,  
    Bringing God Himself so near?

## CHINA

THE sleeper was old, as they thought,  
And mad. He turned in his sleep  
With a groan and a curse.  
And his bones,—how they rattled with age!  
Ah, thus had the centuries wrought  
Their will! The sound made us weep.  
Then they caught at his purse;  
“Here is gold! Let us make him a cage,  
And his heritage  
Let us keep.”

There were struggling and blows in the room.  
The man—they declared him wild,  
And with iron they bound  
Him, and caged him before they were done.  
Then silence ensued like the tomb.  
Through the bars looked a visage mild,  
With a wonder profound  
And a smile like the rising sun.  
The awakened one  
Was a child.

## THE PASSING GIFT

THIRSTING and worn, a pilgrim  
Sank by a moss-grown wall;  
High overhead the clustering grape  
Nodded its branches tall.

There in the restful shadow,  
Breath as of angel fair  
Stole o'er the weary pilgrim's brow,  
Scented the lifeless air.

Started the pilgrim, wond'ring  
Whence was the fragrance sweet.  
The grape-vine shading the moss-grown wall  
Tenderly touched his feet.

Gone was the shy, rare perfume;  
And the pilgrim went his way;  
But the joy of the grape-vine's passing gift  
Abides in his heart to-day.

## MIRAGE

AT last!—O God, my thanks,—the lake at last!  
The desert over,—almost over, now;  
My weary feet and parchèd lips endure  
Until thou givest them their long reward.  
At last to rest upon the pebbly beach,  
To lave my limbs,—to drink! Can I endure?  
There shines, in truth, the gleaming, silver lake;  
I see the fair reflection of the shore.  
The palms, inverted, bathe their heads as I—  
I, too, most happy, soon shall bathe my own.  
The islets sleep upon that placid breast  
So cool and gray, despite the glare of noon.  
The glare and glimmer of these desert sands,—  
They blind me? nay, for naught of pain can dim  
The eye that sees that welcome goal, the lake.  
There ships, and there a towered city,—lo,  
My brain reels from the madd'ning solitude  
Of the wild desert I have plodded o'er.  
My throbbing eyelids close; now let me dream  
The taste of water—what could Heaven  
be more?  
'But why delay? Let me not faint until  
I gain thee, loved and longed-for, God-given lake!  
My eyelids lift; I strain my eyes. What! Where?  
The desert only? God! Mirage! I die!

## HER CENTENARY

TO-DAY the century-plant of years  
Has bloomed in honor of her birth,  
Our Heart's-belovèd. Have we tears  
That she no longer treads the earth,  
This blossom rare to pluck and prize?  
Dispel, ye mists that dim and blur  
The vision radiant of her  
Who culls the flowers of Paradise!  
What are the centuries to one  
Who notes the wheeling of the sun  
As but a toy? The timeless day,  
Eternity—what is it, pray?

Ah, time may cease, and space, but yet  
Her love that bore, that brooded long,  
That turned earth-sorrows into song,  
Her love cannot her loved forget;  
And, drifting through th' encircling air,  
In softest touch on cheek or brow,  
Or light caressing of the hair,  
We feel her hallowing presence now.

## A VALENTINE TO —?

I CANNOT now recall the day  
When first I gazed upon thy form,  
Nor yet when first thy small hand lay  
Enfolded close in mine and warm.  
We loved each other from the first,  
And though I sometimes chide thee sore,  
I promise thee, though worse be worst,  
I ne'er will turn thee from my door.  
If ever thou shouldst leave me, Elf,  
I straight should be beside myself.  
If ever thou shouldst from me fly,  
I could no less than quickly die.  
Yet, love thee though I do, thy face  
Will never look on mine in grace!

Save that the mirror, thin disguise,  
Makes medium betwixt our eyes!

## MEASURE FOR MEASURE

MEASURE for measure! How full the years!  
Measure for measure of smiles and tears.  
Rich, the treasure of love and youth,  
Richer, time's measure of honor and truth.  
Who would empty the cups again?  
Empty of pleasure or empty of pain?  
Bitter and sweet:—'tis life's rare wine;  
Something of earthliness,—something divine!

## ABSENCE

Not there! 'Tis the accustomed place,  
    Yet desolate of her.  
I seek in vain her path to trace,  
    But tears my vision blur.  
I cannot know how far may be  
    Her way across the sapphire sea;  
Enough; I miss her from her chair.  
    She is not there!

Gone is her image, yet abides,  
    Heart-deep, her presence still;  
Untouched by time, unmoved by tide,  
    It sets my pulse athrill!  
A mystery of love and joy,  
    A bitter-sweet that cannot cloy!  
She is not there? She is not near?  
    Ah,—she is here!

## RECALLED

CHILD, thou hast beckoned back my feet  
From fields of asphodel,  
Unheeding seraph music sweet,  
This word to tell.

Know, that of earth's or heaven's powers,  
Below, around, above,  
Naught satisfies while it devours  
Like mother-love.

I hug the torture to my breast,  
Thy bitter need of me.  
My paradise? God's large bequest,—  
My love for thee!

## ANÆSTHESIA

SOFTLY to sleep in the hollow of God's hand,—  
Perhaps to waken soon and understand  
    His holy way.  
Perhaps to dream again the dream of life,  
To feel its pain of struggle, fear and strife,  
Perhaps to slumber till the night of years  
Is past, and, dawning radiant, appears  
    The perfect day.

## TO A SEWING-BIRD

SING, little bird, of the long ago,  
When our little-girl-grandmothers used to sew ;  
Sing, little sewing-bird, sing ;  
Large of mouth and silver of wing; sing !  
Stitch after stitch of the long white seam,  
The end in your mouth so you could not scream,  
Impatient, nor warble, nor sing,  
Screwed to the table,—now little bird, sing !

Had they time to dream, so long ago,  
Our little-girl-grandmothers, learning to sew ?  
Work was in plenty, and toys were few,  
But you were a tool and a plaything, too ;  
Stand on your crimson cushion and sing,  
Little sewing-bird, sing !

Hand over hand on the hem or the seam,  
Yes, there was many an hour to dream ;  
But which of their dreams have ever come true ?  
I know not, little bird, do you ?  
Little sewing-bird of the silver wing,  
Sing, bird, sing !

## SWEET PEAS IN SEPTEMBER

'Tis true they've gone to seed.  
It seems but yesterday  
Since these, now withered on the stalk,  
Were blooming bright and gay.

Poor things! Well, let them be,  
They've had their time to grow;  
A little while and they will lie  
Forgotten 'neath the snow.

Nay, cease your senseless words.  
Forgotten they'll not be.  
You say they've gone to seed, and yet  
You have no eyes to see.

The flowers, true, are gone,  
But every ripened pod  
Gives promise of new, stirring life,  
Beneath the next spring sod.

Alas for you and me,  
If, when we've gone to seed,  
We've left no hope of future good  
Bound up in word or deed.

The flowers may fade away,  
Our graces may depart,  
But neither they nor we are dead,  
Unless we're dead at heart.

## A JUNE DAY

BUBBLING, bubbling, fast and free,  
Are the springs of the song-bird's song.  
Deaf is the ear that cannot hear  
The sound of its gushing, sweet and clear,  
The flowing of joyous melody  
That bubbles the whole day long.

Glowing, glancing, green and gold,  
Are the haunts of the lover bird.  
Blind is the eye that cannot see  
All nature in her ecstasy,  
The wooing lights of wood and wold  
That win with never a word.

Holy, holy, field and tree  
And river and rock and sod.  
Dead is the heart that cannot feel  
The vision whirl, the senses reel,  
Thrilled with the blessed mystery  
Of the presence of nature's God !

## THE BANQUET BOARD

I SAT me down at Life's banquet board,  
    The linen lustre-white,  
And many goblets from her hoard  
    She brought me, burnished bright.

“Now free art thou to choose,” said she,  
    “The cup which I shall fill ;  
Yet, choosing, harken unto me :  
    Drink all, nor leave, nor spill.

“The taste upon the foaming brim  
    Not always prophesies ;  
The bitter, hidden from the rim,  
    In dregs full often lies.

“The cup of pleasure, gilded o'er,  
    When deeply thou shalt drain,  
May hold a drop of wormwood more  
    Than e'en the cup of pain !

“The cup of sin thou canst not touch  
    Without a crimson stain :  
Or sipping only, drinking much,  
    Beware the mark of Cain !

“The cups of youth, of fame, of joy,  
Thou choosest well, but know  
That even these will ofttimes cloy,  
Oft hold the lees of woe.

“The cup of love,—take thou but this,  
And, with thy failing breath,  
Thou tastest naught but heavenly bliss  
Within the cup of death!”

## IN MINOR STRAIN

FALL, little flower,  
And where thou fallest, lie.  
Thou knowest not the meaning  
Of the solemn words *to die*;  
Thy life an hour of beauty,  
Thy death a fragrant sigh,  
O little flower, what matters it  
To thee, to live or die?

Throb, little heart,  
And when thy throbbing's o'er,  
Take thou the rest awaiting thee  
Where sorrows are no more.  
Thy life a noble struggle,  
Thy death a glad release,—  
Ah, little heart, what rapture rare  
To die and be at peace!

## SOUL-SERVICE

SOULS there may be  
That live imprisoned birds to free ;—  
A service sweet,  
But incomplete.  
Souls there are  
That gleam afar,  
Like some deep-set resplendent star,  
Dim-sighted ones to guide and bless  
With other-worldliness.  
Mayhap a stranger-soul beneath thy roof  
Gives Heaven proof.  
An inspiration stirs the air;  
Life becomes fair;  
Sleeping emotions wake to words,  
Sweet actions follow like meek herds,  
And, cage-doors opened, thoughts like birds  
Outward fly  
Toward the sky.

## MY SINGING GROVE

I PLANTED me a singing grove,  
Ah, long and long ago!  
Before my heart had hoary grown  
A thousand years or so.

A thousand years of dying dreams,  
Of stimulating pain,  
A thousand years of bitter tears,  
Of loss and fruitless gain.

A thousand years! What suns and storms  
My grove had given tongue!  
What matins and what vesper songs  
Ineffably had sung!

To-day I sought my singing grove  
With sad and chastened mind;  
Its deep-toned psalm was healing balm,  
So merciful, so kind!

## BEFORE

COULD I but slip the latch of dull Routine,  
And fly her House of Care, far, far away  
From out the roar of jarring voices here,  
On wings of emprise would my soul be borne,  
Beneath the starry midnight, through the dawn,  
Between the sunset bars, or at high noon,—  
It matters not, so I were no more slave  
To her Convention names Reality.  
In dreams my mistress hath appeared to me :  
Her name is Beauty,—long my worship true,—  
And her I'd seek through wilderness of worlds,  
And prove that I could drink her draught of life.

I hear her calling clear above the din  
Of human hindrance. Stronger than desire  
The force that thrills, that fills, nor lets me stay !  
Now must I slip the latch and wing away !

## AFTERWARD

MY soul is drenched with beauty, as a moth  
Enchanted by the glamour of the sea,  
Slow-circling in the ambient twilight hour  
Above the glistening sands, by rosy waves  
Is caught and lured beneath the laughing foam.  
Its too incautious wing is powerless  
To cope with its environs, limpid, deep.  
But now in sport, if not in scorn, behold  
A billow lifts and leaves the moth far up  
The sloping margin. Passive there it lies  
Until, at last, as moved by vague unrest,  
It folds its wings, unfolds and folds again.

So sits my soul, escaped from beauty's thrall  
By just so much of grace as takes not life ;  
And, dreaming sweet, far, unforgotten things,  
Dumbly it folds, unfolds and folds its wings.

## THE DRY STREAM-BED

THERE'S a stream in my garden; it does not flow  
Except in the winter, twice or so,  
When a cloud-burst sends a rushing flood,  
Like a maiden's tingling, blushing blood,  
Across the face of our garden space.

There are tears in my heart, but they do not fall,  
Do not rise to my trembling lids at all,  
Till a heart-burst comes of love or pain.  
Ah, the tears that fall like a winter rain,  
Gushing and free! Glad relief to me!

## PRAISE

No less the grass sings than the bird,  
Only by fewer is it heard;  
And every raindrop says a grace,  
Falling to its appointed place.

What think you of the germ that slays?  
Is it another form of praise?

## EVOLUTION

My brother stone lies sleeping,  
Deep sleeping under sod.  
Shall he and I awake one day  
In likeness unto God?  
Who says, "He sleeps forever,  
But I shall sleep to wake,"  
Counts not the steps of sharp ascent  
That flesh to soul must take.  
From stone to waving grasses,  
From meadow flower to man,  
From man to God,—oh, vain desire  
The universe to span  
By mortal mind! But let us  
Climb humbly to the light;  
For lo! the stone rejected  
Is precious in His sight.

## INTERPRETATION

THE common light of every day  
Falls on a waiting world;  
To common winds, or east or west,  
Yon sails are set or furled;  
From out the common arching blue  
The thunderbolts are hurled.

But to the turret watcher high  
How manifold the views!  
The prism knows light's secret  
Of a thousand thousand hues.  
The lightning and the wind effect  
What master-mind may choose.

Ah, sorrow is a common thing—  
As common as the day;  
And fortune blows, as blow the winds,  
A common, fickle sway;  
And death falls, like the thunderbolt,  
Upon the common way.

Take turret, Soul! In wisdom hold  
Love's prism to thine eye;  
Let this be thine interpreter  
In earth and sea and sky;  
Then all-courageous, spread thy wings,  
What winds may blow, to try!

## MY GIFT

God gave to me a sealèd prize,  
Marked "Grief. It is thine own."  
Foot-spurned, it lay;  
I turned away,  
My heart already stone.

At last, "It is God's gift!" I cried,  
Broke seal, and therein found  
The golden key  
Of sympathy  
To mysteries profound.

## ASSURANCE

'TWAS yester eve an avalanche  
Entombed the flowery mead;  
Beneath a glacier, here am I,  
A germinating seed.

It will not be the morrow's sun  
I'll greet above the snow;  
But what's a thousand years? Mine hour  
For bloom will come, I know!

## MY CHALICE

THE chalice of my day is filled  
With golden wine from happy hours,  
Slowly and tenderly distilled  
As dew from honey-holding flowers.

The measure brims with fancies bright,  
It sparkles with remembrance sweet;  
But, warming, cheering, full of light,  
One drop of sorrow makes replete

My draught of day. A bitter hour  
Was needed, thus to clarify  
The mead, and give a quickening power.  
Grateful, I lift my chalice high.

## A DOOR

BESIDE a camper's trail I chanced to see,  
Discarded from an over-heavy load  
And waiting prone and all indifferently  
Until a shoulder strong should bear it hence,  
A door,—an ordinary door of wood.

I paused and looked upon that thing so dumb,  
A wooden door. Mutely it spake to me  
Of much pertaining unto life indeed.  
So common was it! Stuff of cheapest pine,  
And one of million millions made by rule.  
Can individuality have place  
Where roars the wheel of soulless circumstance,  
A factory of crudity and law?  
No careful brain and hand shaped part to part;  
A fault in grain or cure may warp induce;  
The door itself can utter no complaint.  
And yet, when all is said and all is done,  
Its purpose and its place in life are sure.  
Where'er it find a hinge it is a door;  
Open or closed, a symbol eloquent  
Of much unspoken. Opportunity!  
A common door,—but it may make or mar  
A destiny,—mayhap or yours or mine!

## AFFINITY

A LONG procession passeth by  
Beside the boundless sea :  
A motley throng thou dost descry  
That moyeth ceaselessly.  
But on one pilgrimage are they ;  
Unknowing, one their goal.  
One impulse breathing through their clay,  
Their wand'ring doth control.

Albeit to each thou bidst God-speed,  
Few step within thy door,—  
Thy spirit-kinsmen ; few, indeed,  
But thine forevermore.  
Nor time nor place may move them hence ;  
Though seeming distance hide,  
Still, soul in soul can plumb pretense,—  
Thy spirit-kin abide.









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